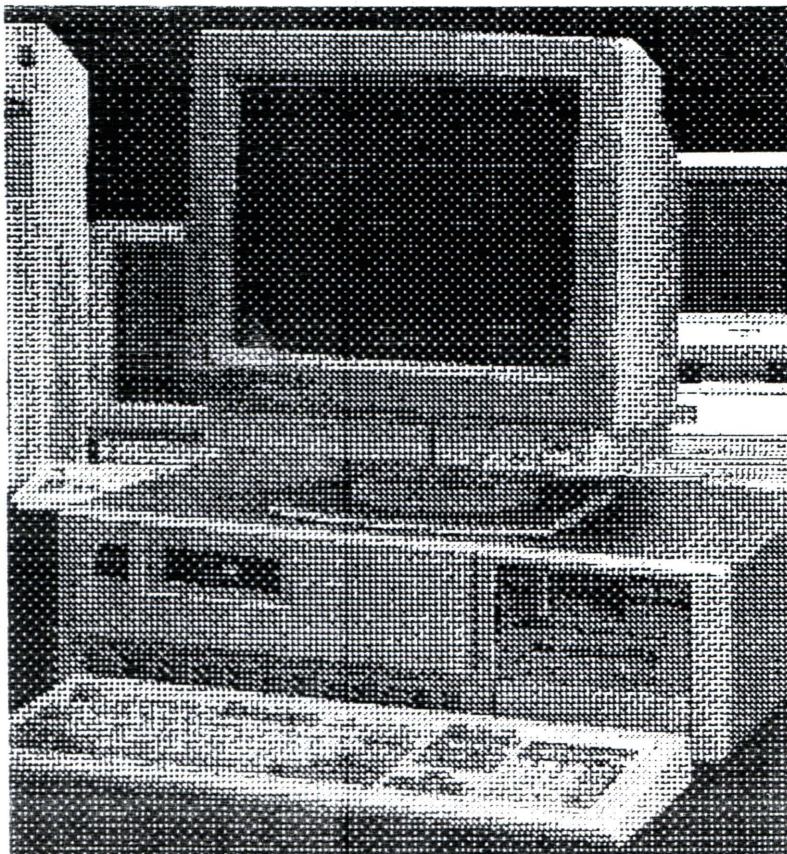


THE COMPUTER U F O NEWSLETTER



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"The Computer UFO Newsletter" is an aperiodical independent newsletter published irregularly, and entirely devoted to presentation of works and debates about computer applications in ufology. Contributions are open to all researchers with personal experience in the field. Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily shared by the Editor.

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EDITORIAL

("The Computer UFO Newsletter is still alive !")

After more than two long years of sad silence, finally our newsletter strikes back again ! As for all amateurish interests, the moment when more concrete and important engagements in everyday life arrive is just the same of a drastic fall of the interest itself. This happened about two years ago, shortly after the last published issue of "The Computer UFO Newsletter". A change of this editor's job produced a heavy restriction of his spare time to be devoted to ufology. He was a sleeping ufologist, but now he has just woken up and he is ready for new battles. One of the many causes having postponed continuously the release of this issue was the lack of material to be presented to our readers' attention. News and papers really worth to be published are extremely scarce. We think it as another effect of the clear decrease of ufologists (in Europe, at least) and their actual interest about the matter. Surely arguments like MJ-12, Gulf Breeze saga and crashed saucers are much more exciting, and easily understandable than cold reasoning about data processing or data storing. More, after two years many things in informatics have changed too. The home computer boom has quickly vanished into thin air, leaving place to a less wide market of higher level computers, featuring impressive graphic abilities (Amiga and Atari). One direct consequence in ufology: most enthusiasts once using a Commodore 64 have thrown it away or aren't interested in it anymore. This is a typical example of what happened in Italy. In the

meanwhile, personal computer clones have just become a de-facto standard, even though fans of the excellent Apple Macintosh don't agree. Desktop publishing systems and sophisticated equipments like laser printers and scanner are becoming more and more common and accessible to ufologists too. But all of this hardware is always restricted to a relatively small group of people involved in UFO research. Our feeling is that we are losing that large base of enthusiasts happy to use their own home/personal computer for UFO projects. Misknowledge about what to do, a distorted vision of computers, frustration produced by handling cold data without any amazing story about spaceships, and outer space visitors, as well as some objective problems in exchanging data between different computer systems can be some of the reasons of the rapid loss of interest in possible involvements of computer technology in UFO research. Maybe this is a point of view biased by the Italian situation, maybe it is a wrong estimate of the situation. We hope so. We hope this brand new issue of "The Computer UFO Newsletter" could be a mean able to discover even more people willing to use their own machine to process correctly all that enormous mass of data we are dealing with. Well, what's new about our Newsletter ? As announced in the distant last issue, press quality has been enhanced thanks to the massive use of desktop publishing resources: a 386 PC clone with 70 Mb hard disk, 2 Mb RAM, colour monitor 1024 x 768 pixel

with alleged super-VGA graphic card, laser printer, handy scanner (we might use two different Howtek/SHARP colour scanners if interface software were only available), Ventura Publisher 2.0 Professional Extension software. Of course, the same system is currently used for other purposes related to this editor's UFO involvement. The number of pages of this issue is lower than previously announced: waiting for other material could mean a further delay. We need to announce to our friends "The Computer UFO Newsletter" is still alive and want to develop its aims, even though slowly. We cannot give any guarantee about the time of next issue release: this is an aperiodical independent publication, which comes out only when available material allows it. So, please be patient. This issue ends the subscription to Volume 2. We aren't interested anymore in supplying it upon subscription. Since next issue "The Computer UFO Newsletter" will be shipped only on exchange basis): special agreements can be taken into consideration, please contact these editor for details. We hope you'll enjoy this new issue. Comments, criticisms and suggestions are always welcome if useful in improving our contents and style: don't forget articles as well ! See you at the next issue.

A SURVEY ABOUT UFO DATABASES

In past issues of this Newsletter we listed some databases concerning catalogues of UFO cases, bibliog-

raphies and other miscellaneous matters related to ufology. Anyway, the situation is far from being clear and exhaustive. Therefore, we would like to start a survey among all the readers of "The Computer UFO Newsletter" in order to get a picture of whatever has been produced in computer-based UFO databases.

Enclosed this issue you are getting a short questionnaire to be filled for such a survey. Please feel free to duplicate it and pass to other researchers able to supply useful information. A quick response is requested, so that we could process the data just for publication of alleged results on the next issue of the Newsletter. Full credit will be given to each person replying the questionnaire.

This survey would like to be a mean able to inform anybody about who has what. We believe it rather important in order to start an exchange of data among researchers by those inexpensive media floppy discs are.

So, please fill the questionnaire with requested data as far as you know them and send it to this editor just tomorrow !

If you have any information about computer applications in ufology (software, databases, etc), please inform us as soon as possible. We need any kind of news, so to make the Newsletter an actual forum for the UFO-computer amateur.

FORTCAT

PRELIMINARY NOTES ABOUT A CATALOGUE OF ITALIAN FORTEAN EVENTS

- by Umberto Cordier -

As you know, the term "fortean" comes from the name of the late Charles Hoy Fort (1874-1932), an amazing american collector of odd facts. Fort wrote four different books: he was the promoter of a special scientific "philosophy", already developed by some illustrious people, and developed by a few modern epistemologists at present too.

Fort's opera has left a clear trace: a lot of students in all over the world followed it researches and now many associations, and magazines are practically the Fort's heirs. Ufology itself could be considered a "daughter" of the whole fortean research: aims and methods should be the same. More, in Fort's notes you can find a lot of events and phenomena to be considered as "proto-UFO" cases. Presently, there is an interesting evolution and ripening of fortean studies with some important results: it is enough to mention William Corliss' huge work associated with his own "Sourcebook Project" (- We hope our friend Corliss will tell us something about the use of PC with his work, one day or another ! Ed. -).

The quick diffusion of home/personal computers among the people

brought new enthusiasm, and developments.

Our work involves the examination, the filing, and the processing of great quantities of documents, information, data from very different sources: computer technology can actually supply a worth help. Someone started interesting enterprises to store on computer complete files and catalogues, as well as to perform in-depth statistical analyses. As regards fortean research, Bob Rickard proposed a valuable project for a fortean database. In Italy, the national group Centro Italiano Studi Ufologici (C.I.S.U.) developed a lot of UFO works by personal computers, thanks to the involvement of Maurizio Verga and other associates.

As a member of C.I.S.U. and student of fortean phenomena, I want to explain briefly my own proposal for the creation of an Italian database of such a kind of events. The catalogue will be named "FORTCAT", and limited to Italian casuistry only: at first, I'll store only events happened in this current century, then I'll start to file also older facts.

During a preliminary phase of the project there will be a close examination of ideas and proposals coming from other researchers, as well as the collection of all sources. The second step will be the choice of definitions, codes, software to run the database and right hardware to use. The task is stimulating, but difficult due to two main problems: the great quantity of possible subjects, and the dispersion of sources.

General criteria for the development of the project will be the following ones:

- no limit of date (the file will be continuously updated)
- no limit about the kind of source (books, newspapers, magazines, reports, rumours, etc.....)

- no limit about the kind of quality (hoaxes, identified or unreliable cases will be included in the file too)

Anyway, each case will have a "quality coefficient" (about the quality of sources), a "reliability coefficient" (about its "reality"), and a "strangeness coefficient" (about the difficulty to explain the alleged phenomena). Each of them will assume a value between 0 (the worst quality) and 1 (better quality), with eventual fractional digits. A set of strict standard criteria will be developed to give to each case the appropriate value. All coefficients are linked each other, and, often, only one or two of them can be assigned due to the limited available information. On the ground of new sources they can be changed during the development of the project. Such coefficients of evaluation allow to give a "weight" to the items of the phenomenology, so that results produced from statistical analyses will be more meaningful.

In my own opinion, the catalogue shouldn't have limits about the type of phenomena taken into consideration, even though a few criteria of methodological selection would be necessary. Some great classes of events could be the following ones:

- strange astronomical, geophysical and meteorological phenomena.
- falls of strange artifacts or matters.
- sightings of mysterious animals.
- a part of "borderline" UFO phenomena.

- some spontaneous paranormal phenomena.
- miracles

The catalogue's heart will be a database mainly including the following fields: Code, Time, Place, Typology, Coefficient of evaluation, Sources, Abstract.

Finally, I would like to recommend all researchers by the following two proposals:

(1) the establishment of other national fortetan catalogues, produced by a close collaboration of the related researchers.

(2) Direct co-operation among catalogues coming from different countries, by an exchange of ideas, and data.

This is a kind of work similar to that carried out in connection with the national Italian UFO catalogue, which establishment was divided among a lot of people working on local basis. Time could give us a great collection of national fortetan databases, so that future people could have a really powerful tool to develop the study of such unusual phenomena. People interested in these ideas, and in FORTCAT project could write to:

Umberto Cordier, casella postale 269, 17100 Savona, ITALY.

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

A NEW BREAKTHROUGH IN UFO RESEARCH

- The Italian Example -

by Maurizio Verga

Serious UFO research always had the problem to handle huge amounts of raw data to create well-organized database and process statistical analyses. Forty years of worldwide sightings have supplied us millions of data which are near impossible to use correctly and quickly by hand. And as ufology is essentially founded on such data you realize that the methodology to process them is extremely important. It is enough to think to UFO catalogues of the sixties or seventies, which took months to their authors: analyses on those great collections of cases were simply frequency distributions, also because time necessary to process other kinds of more sophisticated tests was beyond the possibility of those pioneer researchers. Nowadays, computer technology offers us an impressive computing power evolving day after day: a today's \$ 7,000 personal computer

give us performances near unthinkable a quarter of a century ago.

The great diffusion of home and personal computers among common people (and ufologists are included in them !) leads us to a new era. Those machines can store, process, and retrieve as many data as included in a book in a few seconds by a relatively low investment. Time when the single ufologist had a paper file of hundreds of handwritten cards is finished. Spare time is always limited and available data have become so complex that sophisticated analyses are needed. The personal computer is really becoming necessary for each serious ufologist who wants to carry out a comprehensive research on large quantities of data quickly, error-free, and by high-level tools. In such a perspective the modern ufologist is becoming near like a professional researcher, as our matter of interest compel us to do this if approached under a scientific point of view. Of course, it isn't enough to own a computer to be able to carry out serious works: knowledge of alleged software, power of hardware, good sense of organization, and a good methodology to handle data are surely necessary. Otherwise, the ufologist is just like a boy using a fine sophisticated computer for videogames or kitchen recipes and nothing more.

Beyond the very first attempts in using computer to store and produce statistics dated sixties (Jacques Vallee teaches), since the first years of the eighties home, and personal computing touched ufologists.

They started to use this new tool as a file, where to store and retrieve his own files, from UFO sightings to colleagues' addresses. Then they learned to use it like a more sophisticated typewriter and someone other to publish bulletins and magazines. But the general impression is that no one knows what to do by it: applications developed by ufologists on personal computers are generally quite simple, and, often, useless. It is a real pity: to organize the work of each single researcher could lead to the establishment of really worthy data bases and statistical analyses, just as an example. Unfortunately, ufologists using a PC are generally far one from the other or, even, placed in different countries. No one knows what the other is doing, so double works are very common.

THE ITALIAN EXAMPLE

Even though Italy hasn't as many installed PCs as United States or West Germany, personal and home computers are very common, and, some time ago, fashionable too. As one of the directors of the leading Italian UFO organization, Centro Italiano Studi Ufologici (C.I.S.U.), I realized a lot of members of our national group were buying a computer, and they wanted to use it just for UFO research. In 1986 I founded "Rete Ufologica Computerizzata" (R.U.C.), which English translation is Computer UFO Network. That was the

starting point of a series of enterprises that cannot be found in any other foreign country, as the number of people involved, produced material and results. The chief aims were two: the storing of the whole Italian UFO file (about 10,000 estimated entries, 6,000 of which are currently available in MS-DOS dBase III format) under the form of provincial files, and the production of texts for the many C.I.S.U. publications.

Parallely, projects about the development of new software, evaluation and use of available commercial software (for example astronomy programs able to identify the position of stars and planets at a given date and place), production of demos to be displayed during UFO conferences or TV shows, and development of statistical studies about different samples of Italian UFO sightings were proposed to network members and quickly started. A special Bulletin named "Bollettino R.U.C." was published to supply detailed information about works in progress, and any kind of useful information about computers and ufology: nine different issues have been produced until this time. More, it was a good mean to propose members what to do. RUC membership arrived at about eighty people, most of which gave a near regular contribution. The amount of data, and information entered, and processed by those people was really impressive: we think it is the only example of an organized team of UFO enthusiasts working together in all over the world.

The most common computer among members is the IBM compatible PC, followed by the old glorious Commodore 64: this one was essentially used as a low cost terminal where to insert basic data of all Italian sightings. We know it is but a toy, but a lot of people owns it, and it is very easy to use for non-trained users. Most CISU members collecting UFO sightings of their own province (in order to establish the national UFO catalogue directly on computer) made just use of a C-64 to store those data on floppy disc or tape. Then all data coming from all participants to the project ("Progetto Cataloghi Regionali") were transferred on a Compaq 386/20 PC and processed to produce a complete national catalogue. At the same time, many people were sending to the national headquarters of CISU articles and papers to be published in the Center's magazines, and monographs under the form of files produced on Commodore, Apple or IBM machines. Transferring them in an Apple Macintosh wasn't a problem: desk-top publishing software, and laser printer were later used to print out the final product.

Following is a brief list of some of the works, and enterprises making use of computers in Italy.

(1) Establishment of an over 6,000 entry database referring to the national Italian UFO sightings catalogue, available under the form of dBASE III MS-DOS files (92, one for each province, plus a general one). The database record includes the following fields:

- DATE
- HOUR
- LOCATION
- CLASSIFICATION
- SOURCES

One big file, about 1,000 cases from Tuscania, has been established on a Apple IIgs. Such a reference work (aimed at the easy retrieval of Italian UFO events of any kind) is currently in progress, and it will produce a complete print-out, with special list sorted according to the type of sighting, and place of observation. Statistical analyses, and their display by 3-D graphics are currently under development to produce a special report.

(2) Two special databases have been prepared by this same author: ITACAT and TRACAT. The first one refers to close encounters (near 500 at time of writing) of whatever kind, the second one to trace cases. Both catalogues are available in dBASE III MS-DOS files (Commodore 64 and Apple II versions are available too, but only on special request) both in Italian and English language. A detailed statistical survey of ITACAT, and TRACAT (plus comparisons with 4,000 Italian raw sightings, and foreign samples of landing cases), including a lot of tables, cross tables and graphs. The whole ITACAT 500-page manuscript (in Italian language) is available as Wordstar/ASCII MS-DOS files or alternatively as a CISU special monograph (see related box).

(3) Demo programs to be shown during public conferences, and

similar meetings, where fine coloured screens appear on a monitor supplying detailed information about CISU, alternatively, other sister-groups), UFOs, and ufology. Available for Commodore 64 and PC-IBM.

(4) A database about foreign UFO books and publications owned by Italian ufologists: this project about available literature resources is maintained by CISU member Marco Bottaini on a Apple IIgs. Paolo Toselli, another well known member, has prepared an interesting database about articles from the scientific literature of potential interest for the serious UFO researcher: each entry offer an abstract of the related article, plus full references. A second special database has been recently established about UFOs in commercials: English printouts and explanations of both databases can be requested to CISU. Software runs on Apple IIc.

(5) Different types of computer (essentially PC IBM and Macintosh) are currently used to check position of astronomical bodies in order to test possibilities of explanation for most nocturnal lights sightings. Computer graphic packages able to allow free painting on the screen have been used to draw sketches of phenomena related by witness or to illustrate the sequence of the case itself.

(6) First in Europe, CISU has established a Bulletin Board System (that is a sort of interactive database to be connected via modem, and able to offer many services, including electronic mail) completely devoted

to ufology: its name is UFO B.B.S. The first system, based on a IBM AT with 20 Mbytes hard disk was placed in this author's house. It was operative two nights per week, offering a large quantity of information about UFOs, ufology, latest Italian sightings, catalogues of cases (including close encounters), debates about the matter and information about C.I.S.U. and its publications. It could be accessed via modem at 300 or 1200 baud by any kind of computer. At moment, it is out of work due to the change of hardware, and software: anyway, another system is active in Rome ("U-Link") 12 hours a day, seven days per week, offering to users the same information. They can read them on the screen or download them on disk for further use. This new service, which received a lot of publicity by most Italian newspapers, attracted the interest of both ufologists, and common people: many people became members of CISU just thanks to the B.B.S. by which they got acquainted about the existence of a national serious research center on UFOs. Some interesting projects about the use of the system have been started and first results are expected in the near future: for example, it will be used as a reference point where to send information about latest sightings, so that people can know them in very brief times. "UFO-BBS" and "U-LINK" are services quite different from the French Minitel managed by the French group A.E.S.V., as there is a closer contact between the user and the operator. It is something like the American system "Computer UFO Network" and PARANET. Paralelly, this author has established on

many general purpose Bulletin Board Systems placed in Northern Italy some UFO sections, where users can find serious information about our subject. "U-LINK" is currently receiving about 60 calls per month: most of them are just requests for information, but some are calls from people speaking about their own sightings.

More, CISU is a regular subscriber of the biggest Italian electronic mail service: its box has been using to exchange letters and urgent news among some members.

(7) A professional high cost CAD system can now accessed by C.I.S.U. at any time by this author in order to scan any kind of photo or slide showing a presumed UFO phenomenon. Hardware is based on a Compaq 386/33 with 320 Mb hard disk, 10 Mb RAM, state-of-art graphic card with 10 Mb video RAM, high-resolution 1280 x 1024 pixels color monitor able to handle nearly 17 millions of shades, color scanners ranging from 300 to 900 dots per inch, ink-jet and thermal transfer color printers. We can display the photo or slide enlarged considerably, and then open many different levels of zoom, as well as to manipulate the image in any way. This allows us to carry out a first level survey about the photo, in order to get a better evaluation of the same (dedicated photo-management software should be acquired in the near future). For example, it will be possible to look for eventual features showing a faked nature of the picture. Practically, we'll be able to carry out something just like the US group G.S.W. did in past,

and recent times, even through by a non-dedicated hardware, and software. But our available system can be accessed for many other projects CISU members are scheduling in the field of computer graphics, and in the creation of an images database (relating to supposed UFO photos, and traces mainly).

Everything related here is just only a part of author and CISU activities in applications of computer technologies in ufology. We have contacts, also through "THE COMPUTER UFO NEWSLETTER", with most of researchers in all over the world owning a computer, and using it for UFO research. Personally, I have collected a lot of programs involving UFO research and running on different computers, from Commodore to Apple, from PC IBM to IBM System 36: any international ufologist interested in the matter can ask for them. The exchange of experience, suggestions and software is producing the growth of an interesting common knowledge: we hope to promote an international computer project in the future, involving all of these people, and devoted to the computer-related analyses of large quantities of raw, and selected UFO sightings. Something similar is being to be started by our colleagues working on Fortean documentation for the establishment of an international Fortean database (see Bob Rickard's paper on "The Computer UFO Newsletter" Vol. 1 n. 6). We hope to follow them soon.

SCIENCE . CAT

A special bibliographic catalogue

The second, revised, and enlarged, edition of SCIENCE.CAT has been released by the Italian group C.I.S.U. in November 1988 under the form of a 30-page booklet.

Authored by Paolo Toselli, and written in English it is an annotated bibliography of articles potentially relevant to, or useful for, the UFO study published in scientific journals and books, but not necessarily mentioning the argument.

Information is just one of our most vital resources, across the board, not just in ufology. The purpose of SCIENCE.CAT is to establish a central information resource centre. Instead of a catalogue listing the resources of an utopian centre which contain a physical copy of "everything" internationally published (a common dream among many ufologists !), it is more important to have a unique "who has what" catalogue that is stored and updated on a computer.

To make up for a general inadequate collections and lack of available subject information the author hope to create a bibliographic catalogue of the holdings of most UFO researchers interested in this project.

Such concepts reduce unnecessary duplication of resources, since researchers really interested in a specific subject will be able to obtain the articles to an established library

or to ask to the holder for a copy. In the meanwhile, Toselli has catalogued his own collection of papers published in scientific non-UFO journals and books (over 260 entries), using a Apple IIC computer, and a database software (Works).

Every record includes:

- *a list of subject-matter*
- *surname, and name of author or authors*
- *title of the article, book or chapter (in two long lines)*
- *journal name (or the publisher's one in case of references to books and other non-journal items)*
- *date of publication, volume number, first page, last page (in case of books, and other non-journal items the volume prompt is changed in the town of the publishing house)*

More, there are three special codes respectively for language, kind of reference, and mentioning of UFOs. A short abstract (max. 450 characters) in English is linked to every record.

The author is hoping that this bibliographical project may be a real favour to the UFO study, and he is waiting for collaboration of all concerned. His address :

**Paolo Toselli, via J. dal Verme 7,
I-15100 Alessandria, ITALY.**

The same author has recently released the very first edition of "UFO in Advertising - A catalogue of UFO/ET images, concepts and words used in commercials" (C.I.S.U. 14-page booklet, April 1989).

Since the UFO image has got a part in the re-discovery of fantastic as a reaction to positivism, UFOs appear in mass media as well as in the skies: cinema, TV, popular books, comics, and commercials advertisings have thus been populated by "alines", home-searching ET's and phantasmagorical UFOs.

This is but a first attempt of listing all known commercial advertisements using the UFO/ET stereotype for selling and/or naming products. Indeed, the author began by cataloguing his own collection of advertisements, comprising over 130 entries from all over the world, on a personal computer database (established on Apple IIc).

Every record in the following catalogue includes:

- name of product and kind of supply

manufacturing firm

- kind of advertising campaign, *i.e.* :

Media employed:

TV: TV spot

PR: press

PO: poster

RA: radio

O: other

Year

Country

Code:

A: UFO/ET presented as such

B: disguised UFO/ET /subliminal reference)

C: UFO as a trade mark

- advertising agency (if known)
- filed sources:

PR: press clipping (journal and date)

VR: video-recording (network and date)

R: audio-recording

PO: poster

PA: packing

PH: photography or slide

L: letter (from manufacturer or agency)

CAT catalogue or listing

OS: only second-hand information

- description of the advertisement

Hoping that such a catalogue may be of help for a better understanding of the scope of UFOs on the sociological side, Mr. Toselli remains waiting for help from all interested researchers, in order to add new entries, and to be able to produce a more complete list as soon as possible.

Speak about "The Computer UFO Newsletter" to your colleagues. We need full support from all the UFO community.

BECASSINE REPORT 8

- by Denys Breysse -

The coding work on Becassine cases (international CE 3 events) is still on development, but we think time is come to speak about the interesting possibilities in processing the data we have collected. Thanks to the first "experimental" researches we can offer some new ideas: more will come in the future, when the advancement of our task will allow us to enhance the methodologies of current work, as well as to test new studies.

1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

1.1 PORTRAIT OF THE TYPICAL CASE

The first use of all the raw data we collected is the search for the frequencies of presence of each coded parameter. The Becassine software has been written so that such a kind of operation is possible on every file, automatically and without any external intervention. For example, you can see information just as those showed in Table 1.

So it is near possible to produce a "portrait" of the typical case finding the highest frequencies. Here is an example list of its features:

October (20.6%), between 10.00 and 12.00 p.m. (16.1%), from two to

ten minutes (27.4%), along a road or a path (32.9%), male witness (70.3%), alone (61.1%), less than 30 years in age (63.9%), disc-shaped UFO (30.3%), from five to eight meters in size (24.5%), on the ground (66%), metallic in appearance (19.8%), etc.....

These results allow us to know objectively the features by which the phenomenon has been reported by witnesses, even though its real interest is limited. Anyway, at least two different uses are possible at once.

1.2 COMPARISONS WITH OTHER STATISTICAL SURVEYS

We thought worth of attention the comparison of results supplied by Becassine with others coming from different statistical studies carried out on more or less raw collections of all-kind cases, close encounters and close encounters of the third kind only. The consequent information will be essentially qualitative and we'll use it to test the subordination being between results and the selected samples, as well as with the coding parameters. The chief aim is "to cement" methodology and to evaluate the ufologist's bias (and we know such a bias is nearly always present) on his own results.

Here is a Table about the statistical studies we can use for the test:

Statistical studies compared with the Becassine CE 3 file		
Year	Source	Description
1955	Blue Book	2199 US cases
1964	NICAP/Hall	575 US cases
1971	Jader U.Pereira	230 entity cases
1973	Claude Poher	825 cases (82 CE3)
1974	Ramirez/Barbero	109 Spanish cases
1977	Marcel Delaval	217 Italian cases
1977	Raoul Robé	63 French cases
1979	Zigel	256 Russian cases
1979	Eric Zurcher	202 French CE 3
1979	GEPAN	106 reports
1979	Ballester-Olmos	200 Spanish CE
1981	TASCAT	370 Tasmanian case
1981	Mark Rodeghier	441 E.M. cases
1982	Alain Gamard	1000 CE 3 cases
1982	Fernandes	2860 Spanish cases
1983	J..Ruesga Montiel	953 Andalusian cas.
1986	Lars K. Lassen	1338 Danish cases
1987	FALSECAT/Smith	invented cases

(- In the Table "cases" generally refer to unchecked UFO/IFO events - Ed.)

Of course, any other study you know is welcome for our research (- the Author, 9 Av. St. Exupery, 92160 Antony, FRANCE - Ed.).

1.3 COMMENTS ABOUT THE CODING

The raw data coming from the statistical calculations allow to point out those parameters being really interesting for the survey, as well as those without any apparent meaning. Once again, it is a problem related to the coding operation.

The preliminary results (on 978 cases) shows, for example, that UFO speed is "high" in 68.8% of the events where such a kind of information is

available. Other values of speed parameter ("motionless", "low", "medium") are respectively 16.1%, 12.1% and 3.0%, referring to quantities relatively scarce. So it seems rather hard to be able to carry out reliable analyses on sub-samples including only a few tens of cases at most.

We think that such a situation shows the usefulness of the first step (descriptive statistics) to define as best as possible the methods by which to develop the whole work.

2. STUDY OF RELATIONS AMONG VARIABLES. ESTABLISHMENT OF PATTERNS

2.1 AIMS AND TOOLS

We want to get a better comprehension about the whole of cases included in the Becassine database and, as a consequence, a more wide vision about the phenomenon (or phenomena) at the ground of such cases. So it is necessary to know the relations - or links - being among the different coding parameters. The idea is to collect these links and to establish progressively some "frames" or "patterns" referring a few aspects of the phenomenon showing some interest for us. Tools able to supply a worth help for such a kind of study are several. We think to use two of them. As a first step, the factorial analysis should be able to allow an overall vision about relations among data: the second step will be the join of those results with statistical test as the well-known "chi-

square" and it will be able to quantify the supposed relations.

2.2 EXAMPLES

Some works having developed those same guidelines have been already carried out.

* Mark Rodeghier in his own work about cases involving vehicle interferences (published by CUFOS), after some classic frequency distributions, developed a "pattern analysis" by the chi-square test. He studied one after the other a few couples of variables (UFO color/physiological effects; color/UFO size; color/sound; shape/size; etc.....), pointing out the presence of three typical "frames":

- A - beamlight + physiological effect + UFO following the vehicle + control on vehicle + blue color
- B - disc + metal-made + rumour + landing
- C - light + straight path + size 0-5m.

* In recent times Willy Smyth processed a similar analysis on UNICAT cases, finding the existence of two meaningful "patterns":

- HEPDRIL - (electromagnetic effects happening in a lonely place).
- CLINROP - (UFO landed near an isolated road)

Smyth's study is really interesting and it seems re-discover (by a different approach) the typical CE 2

and CE 3 events, even though it is desirable to couple his own methods with some statistical tests to actually comprehend its value: at moment such a kind of analysis has been made very roughly.

* Recently, French researcher Eric Maillot developed some interesting ideas while working on preliminary data coming from the Becassine file. Like Rodeghier, he took some couples of variables (hour/vehicle or not vehicle; physiological effects or absence of them; color/lightness; etc.....) into consideration. He got the (preliminary) conclusion according to which close encounters of the third kind with alleged vehicle are meaningfully more numerous during the night, no matter the country where they happen. On the contrary, some physiological effects (amnesia, paralysis, etc.....) seem to be essentially linked to a few countries.

Many other ideas have been projected and we'll present them to readers of this Newsletter when they will have been sufficiently developed.

* At the same time, we managed (as an experiment) a factorial study about Becassine cases combining the variables country-hour-date-vehicle or not vehicle-witness' attitude. By this way, we have clearly remarked that cases with vehicle in preference took place by night, whatever is the value of all the other parameters. It seems a solid result, as Rodeghier, Smyth and Maillot got the same by different means. Again, many ideas are projected for a near

future development, but we would like to receive any kind of opinion and suggestion from all researchers.

2.3 CAUTIONS OF USE

One thing is the use of statistical means to find some results, another one is to comment and to interpret such results. We think that the two following examples are meaningful about what we want to say.

Rodeghier after remarking the three above mentioned patterns states the first two of them refer to true objects and an intelligent behaviour, while the third one is related to a natural unknown phenomenon. Smyth after the establishment of EPDRIL and CLINROP say that "... it seems that HEPDRIL situations show a goal from the intelligence behind the phenomenon to get the witness alone and to exploit him in order to produce the suitable conditions for an abduction ...".

Anyway, it seems to me that in both cases the resulting conclusions are going too far in comparison to the related statistical results. Alleged numbers and tests supply evidence for some relations, but the right interpretation of such relations isn't so easy: let's remember that prosaic hypotheses must be proposed at first and then tested to check a possible validation (or invalidation).

French researcher Eric Maillot uses a really scientific approach for me: after showing relations among variables, he carries out an analysis of the possible causes of such relations. These causes can come from the phenomena we are studying about, as well as from social and/or

cultural factors. I'd like to mention one of his sentences which I think to be particularly meaningful : " ... it is possible that some effects reported by witnesses of close encounters of the third kind depend on the country where the witnesses themselves live. The cultural environment plays a role inside the physical effects on the witness. Is it a bias produced by the local UFO literature or psychosomatic manifestations produced by the fear induced by such a kind of experience ?

I think that only the sequence HYPOTHESIS-TEST-HYPOTHESIS-TEST can allow us to reach a better knowledge of the phenomenon, certainly not the use of tests addressed to confirm our preconceived ideas.

ITACAT Manuscript Ready !

Expected since three years, the new complete ITACAT manuscript has been recently published by Centro Italiano Studi Ufologici (C.I.S.U.). In a 270-page book-style monograph you can find detailed abstracts, critical comments, and full sources of about 430 Italian close encounter cases. A long introduction encompasses an explanation about the work methodology, and three special bibliographies. The whole manuscript has been typed, and paginated by a desktop publishing software, then produced by a laser printer. An updated dBase III/IV file including all Italian C.E. cases ranging 1912 through 1988 is now available on floppy disc (ask for information).

The Monograph "ITACAT - Catalogo italiano degli incontri ravvicinati" can be requested to the Editor or CISU liaison office:

C.so V.Emanuele 108, 10121 Torino, ITALY.

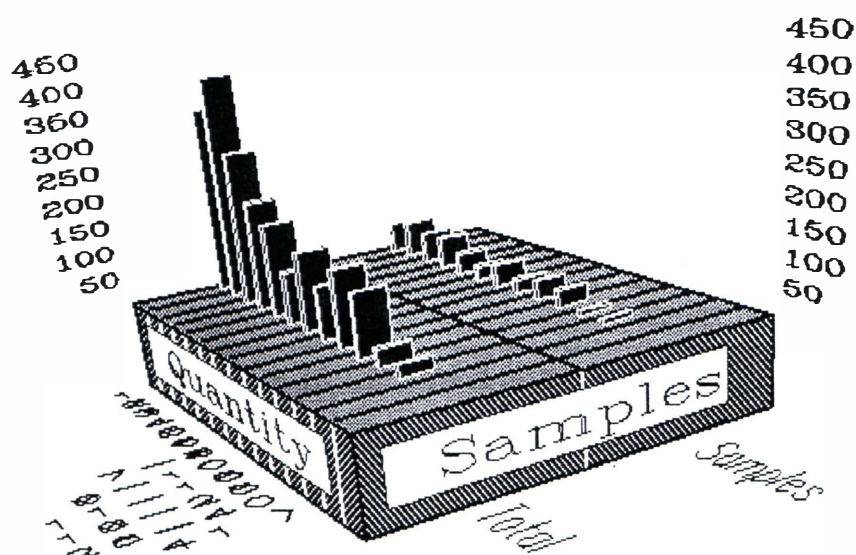
SOME GRAPHS FROM BECASSINE

Denys Breyse released in March 1989 his Becassine Report n. 10, including an impressive 46 table series about statistical analyses carried out on 2003 international cases of Close Encounters of the third, and fourth kind. It seems the wider statistical study ever made, and published about the UFO entities phenomenon: the whole work is still in progress. Deeper analyses (among which commentaries about

the coding, comparison with other statistical work published in the past, factorial analyses, etc ...) are currently in development: "The Computer UFO Newsletter" will soon host a new updated report with additional information.

Due to the interesting matter we are dealing with, a series of graphs directly produced by Breyse's data has been produced and now published especially for our readers.

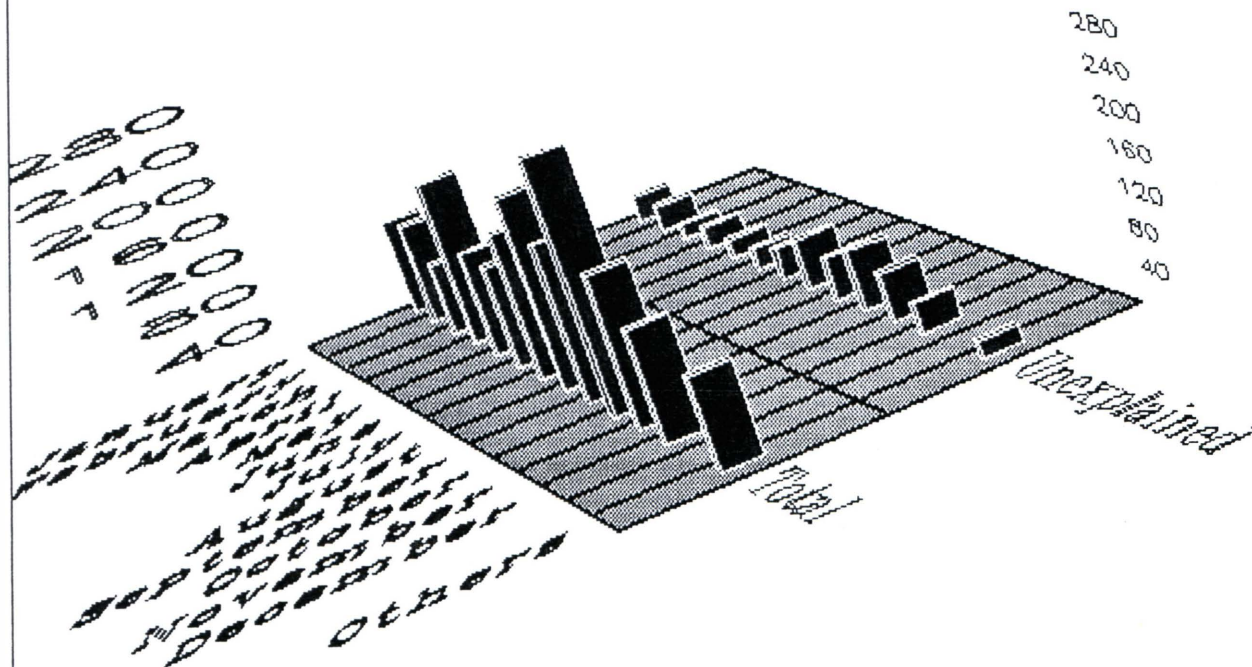
Source distribution of 2003 international entity cases.



Quantity of Sources

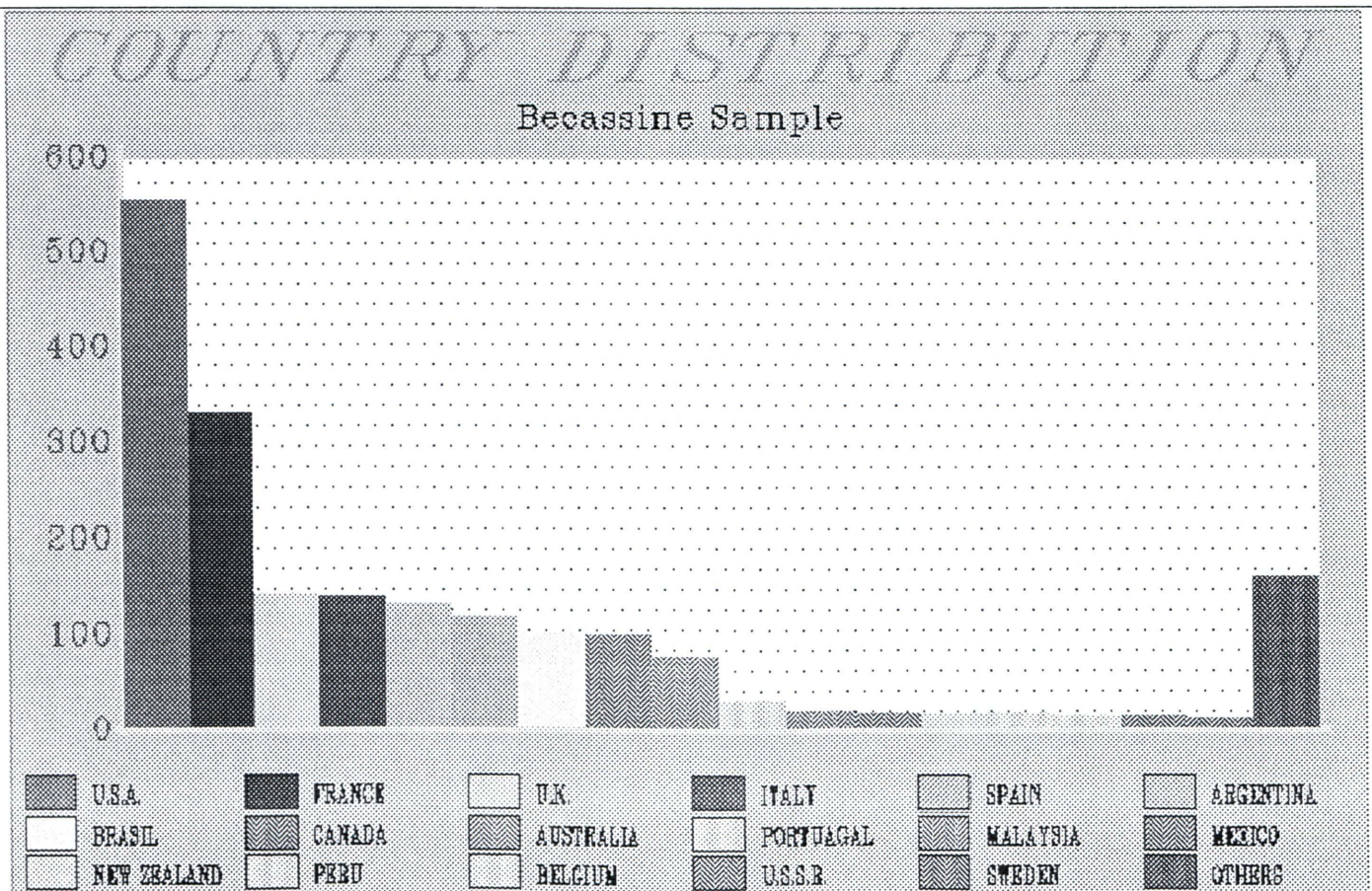
Becassine File (2003 entries)

Month of the Year Distribution



Becassine File (2003 entries)

Monthly distribution over 2003 international entity cases.



NEWS

USING AMIGA 2000

Massimo Cantoni, an ufologist based in Northern Italy, but exclusively dealing with South Swiss UFO sightings, was using his own AMIGA 2000 computer to store the several cases he has collected. About 200 different events have been stored, even though no news about the kind of software and record used has been released. It seems that the computer itself was used to draw sketches of phenomena related by witnesses. A simple example was showed.

("Il Dovere" July 26, 1988)

PROJECTS ABOUT FORT- TEAN DATABASES

Well known Fortean researcher Bob Rickard wrote a very interesting article about a forthcoming Fortean database (TOAD) in the sixth issue of "The Computer UFO Newsletter" (see the description of a similar project made by Italian researcher Umberto Cordier elsewhere in this same issue). The project seems under continuous development: we

hope to get more information in conjunction with the next issue of the Newsletter. Noteworthy exchanges of points of view and ideas about the matter have been published by the US magazine "Archives for Fortean Research Newsletter" in its issue number 7. Among the several letters published by editor Scott Parker, you can find some interesting discussions about problems involved in coding of fortean cases. We welcome "Archives for Fortean Research Newsletter" (Scott Parker, P.O. Box 94, Beaumont, Texas 77706, USA) has a new forum for such a appreciable effort.

PARANET : A REAL COM- PUTER NETWORK FOR "FRINGE SCIENCES"

Since 1986 a special network of B.B.S. (Bulletin Board System) has been established in the United States under the name of "PARA NET". Ufologist and freelance journalist James Speiser is the director of such

an organization operated by a lot of volunteers in more than twelve different US cities. The free of charge service can be connected by dialing number 602-837-0062 (PARA NET main node in Fountain Hills, Arizona) at 300, 1200 or 2400 baud per second rate, 24 hours a day.

In spite of its original aim to deal with all mysterious phenomena, the network is now offering most of its resources to ufology acting like a permanent storage facility for research papers, newsclippings, press releases, magazine articles, anecdotes and any other kind of information related to the topic. In December 1988 James Speiser released the very first issue of "ODDYSEY", the official newsletter of PARA NET Alpha, where network activities are presented and discussed. The newsletter can be requested at P.O. Box 80313, Phoenix, AZ 85060, USA.

PARA NET members are also engaged in maintaining and updating regular news database on the well-known huge 400,000-member COMPUSERVE on-line service. Subscribers of it can type "GO UFO" at any "!" prompt in the CompuServe DISPLA system. Users can get a large selection of information about UFOs and ufology. A weekly discussion of paranormal issues and UFOs in particular is regularly held as a "real-time conference", with contributions of MUFON members and well-known US ufologists, just every Sunday night.

Have you any software of potential interest for UFO research? Please supply us a complete review of it, as well as some comments about your suggestions about its use. Full details about the software will be appreciated. Please submit your text under the form of a MS-DOS ASCII file on floppy disc.

A NEW B.B.S. ABOUT UFOs IN SPAIN

In early 1988 a new Bulletin Board System was established in Madrid. Director Manuel Lopez Cuesta established some sections devoted to topics like ufology, astronomy, and astronautics, where users could read and download texts and news about those matters. We don't know much details about the contents of such material, but we are getting in touch with Mr. Cuesta, hoping that information could be published in a forthcoming issue of the Newsletter. The new B.B.S. has been called "CONTACTO", and it can be accessed dialing the following number: (91) 3319670 by any computer with a modem and suitable communication software. The mail address is: Manule Lopez Cuesta, Apartado 38032, 28031 Madrid, SPAIN.

A FEW SHORT NEWS FROM CUFON

The Computer UFO Network based in Seattle (Washington, USA) seems to survive to the many troubles featuring the life of every UFO enterprise. This Newsletter devoted some space about it in past issues, welcoming this pioneering electronic service directed by Dale Goudie. During the last months CUFON got some funding problems, so serious it was obliged to reduce all its infor-

mation menu to one only (just that delivering documents acquired through the well-known Freedom of Information Act). The service has a 50,000 entry file referring to presumed UFO cases happened between 1947 and 1988, a really worthwhile resource for everyone. The system is currently supported by the work of about 200 volunteers reporting any kind of UFO-related information to CUFON headquarters.

SCANNED IMAGES OF UFO DRAWINGS FOR THE PUBLISHING

In order to preserve an important heritage of drawings, and sketches made by witnesses or artists about anomalous phenomena related in conjunction with UFO sightings this Editor has just accomplished an experimental work. Through a hand-held scanner (DFI Handy Scanner 3000, 400 dpi) a set of about 150 different sketches, and drawings was quickly scanned in black & white. Even though most of images were "line-art" drawings (without grey shades), some quite complex pictures have been scanned as well with good final quality. Images have different sizes, and refer to "objects", "entities", and ground traces exclusively coming from Italian close

encounter events included in ITACAT. All related files have been produced in the *.IMG (GEM) format for MS-DOS computers, but they can be easily converted in other formats (including PC Paintbrush's *.PCX, Dr. Halo's *.CUT, TIFF and MSP). They have been made available on two high density 1,2 Mb 5" 1/4 floppy discs.

The main objective of such an experimental service can be explained in the availability of a worthy collection of UFO "pictures" to be used inside newsletters, magazines, and catalogues. Moreover, we are planning to make use of them inside a planned image database based on a dBase III/IV engine, where together with usual data each case could be integrated with one or more "pictures" of the alleged "objects" or "entities".

A QUICK LOOK AT THE LITERATURE

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM INFORMATICS AND A PRESENTATION OF THE UNICAT PROJECT

During the first Lyon UFO meeting ("Rencontres de Lyon sur le phenomene OVNI") held in April 1987, two papers about the possible

and current involvement of computers in ufology have been presented by two well-known French researchers.

The first one, authored by Denys Breysse, developed some interesting reflections about what we should expect from computer facilities applied to ufology. Starting from a short historical survey of some old projects coping with coding and storing of huge amount of cases (UFOCAT, FIDUFO*, etc ...), Breysse stated some fundamental conditions for approaching any computer-related work:

- quality of cases (it is better to get few actually solid cases rather than hundreds of rumours and newsclipping-generated events), so a strict check of the processed data (whenever possible)
- a careful coding, without any pollution on the data
- the establishment of concrete aims and work hypotheses
- the refusal of preconceived ideas
- the use of fit hardware and software
- a close co-operation

Computers are rightly seen just like a new sophisticated facility able to

process quickly a lot of data, but the analysts must be always present in order to give an interpretation of what we get from those cold machines. The author went on developing his talk considering the available hardware, human resources, the ideas, and the methodology to be behind such a kind of work. Special stress was devoted to the coding problem (is it better to use a previously-defined coding, based on abbreviations, or an open coding exploiting the dynamic concept of "motif" ?) and to the importance of single-researcher works, in order to avoid the many logistic problems arising when establishing a group.

The second paper has been presented by the well-known Belgian researcher Jacques Scornaux. Subject: UNICAT or, better, a long discussion about French/Belgian cases included in Smith's catalogue, and selection criteria for the screening of reports. The latter argument has been developed in length with some interesting comments, while no space was reserved to data processing.

Any material about applications of ufology with computers ? Please let us know them for an eventual publication just on these pages.

* FIDUFO was a project founded by the French UFO magazine "Lumieres dans la Nuit" in 1971 aimed to the storing of French cases. Private groups and UFO buffs would have been allowed to ask for lists and statistics taken from the main file. Due to many reasons (including the limits of hardware available at that time, as well as human resources, the project practically never started.

PAPERS ABOUT COMPUTERS & UFOLOGY IN NEW CLASSIC BOOKS

Every serious ufologist knows about the publication of two very important UFO books (practically, two anthologies of papers written by tens of international researchers for an exhaustive overview of the whole complex matter), now become real "classics": "UFOs 1947-1987 The 40-year search for an explanation" (Fortean Times, 1 Shoebury Road, East Ham, London E6 2AQ, Great Britain) and "PHENOMENON - From Flying saucers to UFOs: forty years of facts and research" (Macdonald, London). Both of them offer a paper about the use of computers as an aid for ufologists.

The first book ("1947-1987") features "Computers in ufology" (pages 238-245), essentially based on two papers by Maurizio Verga, and Jacques Vallée, and intelligently edited by John Spencer. Verga's contribution (original title: "Computers and ufology: the present scene") deals with a now old review of most known applications of computers in ufologists' work. We have to remark publicly a serious error made in conjunction with the comments on Willy Smith's UNICAT Project: the alleged catalogue and the idea behind it haven't failed at all, even though still biased by some problems produced by different factors. Jacques Vallée paper ("Towards the use of artificial intelligence techniques in the screening of reports of anomalous phenomena") is an interesting at-

tempt to evaluate and propose the use of artificial intelligence techniques in discriminating possibly explainable UFO reports. The author developed his project "OVNIBASE" (dated 1987: we don't know anything about eventual developments of it - Ed.) on a Macintosh computer and the NEXPERT SYSTEM software produced by Neuron Data Inc. (Palo Alto, California). OVNIBASE could be thought just as a knowledge base gathering the rules for recognition of the most frequent natural causes of UFO-related sightings. It is practically an inexpensive screen for such reports to be used by skilled researchers while on the phone to a witness reporting an anomalous phenomenon (it is enough for the user to fill in a form with some requested data. Then the software rejects some explanations, proposing a particularly feasible one, on which the system will gradually narrow its focus in order to reach a sufficiently acceptable conclusion). The final OVNIBASE aim is the elimination of most misidentifications, so that skilled scientific analysts could spend their time on those few cases genuinely worthy of full investigation. To be remembered OVNIBASE as described in Vallée paper was only but a prototype: we are expecting details about a more advanced release, so to supply our readers with new information about such an exciting matter.

The chapter "Harnessing the computer" in "PHENOMENON" (recently published by AVON books in USA too), pages 224-237, is nothing but a heavily edited abstract of many articles submitted by Stephen Gamble, Michael Wooten, James Danby,

Willy Smith and Bertil Kuhlemann. A quick look was given to some past, and present BUFORA (British UFO Research Association) projects involving the use of microcomputers, including bibliographic and membership databases. A long space is then devoted to Willy Smith's presentation of UNICAT, and the analysis of some results*. Finally, a quick overview about Project URD has been authored by Swedish researcher Berthil Kuhlemann. The whole work has been carried out on a quite old IBM mainframe /370, still working with punched cards (!). Its guidelines seems really outdated: the main objective (answering to the classic question: "Is there really anything ?") seems an old pharaonic dream about the establishment of bulky collections of cases including everything after a supposed screening of possible IFOs. We think it as a lack of realism towards the historic scarcity of resources in the UFO community. However, the project had 1000 stored cases in March 1985, but very little is known about eventual statistical studies on such a sample.

Have you a home/personal computer, and don't know how to use it in fuology ? Don't fear: read the past issues of "The Computer UFO Newsletter" , and keep in touch with the Editor. You'll be suggested what to do.

LETTERS FROM READERS

"About the observations in your editorial (Vol. 2 issue 1) refering to computers and their use in UFO investigation and study: I agree that the multiplicity of computers makes and operating systems creates difficulties in that the interchange of data is made a lot more difficult. I would not call the situation anarchic though ! More the result of commercial competition, not a bad thing in itself. I hate to think of the cost of microcomputing if there were only one machine, "Big Blue" for example.

Interchange of data is nevertheless still relatively easy if we do the transfer of data in the form of ASCII files. I have done this for several of my own files, exchanging data in the form of ASCII text files between Commodore 64 and Apple II systems using a RS232C link and Communications software. There is no great difficulty, in theory, in exchanging data in this manner between any two machines and this brings me to a second point. Given that it is possible to exchange data by this method, would it not be more practical to promulgate a standard format for a UFO database, which would allow the production of a common form of ASCII file (or, the file could be produced in the form of .DIF or SYLK file, the basic principle is the same). Such an achievement would be more practical than arguing that everyone should use an IBM PC or compatible, which is obsolescent anyway, although the world is still actually waiting for OS/2 !"

James Danby, Preston, ENGLAND

COMING SOON IN THE NEWSLETTER

In the next issue we'll present a project about the establishment of a new database file (using dBase III/IV) for a brand new ITACAT catalogue based on motifs. It will be an experiment about which to open a common discussion.

* The core of UNICAT description has been published extinsively in UFO literature by Smith's himself and other authors, hence our readers should be already acquainted with it.